



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
COMMISSIONER

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations  
(601) 359-1163  
E-mail: [paige@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:paige@mdac.ms.gov)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**October 25, 2012**

**Portrait Unveiling of Tribal Chief Phyliss Anderson at Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum**

A portrait of Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI), was unveiled today at a ceremony at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. Chief Anderson is the first female elected as Tribal Chief of the 10,000-member MBCI, and she is only the fourth Tribal Chief to be elected since the MBCI received federal recognition in 1945.

The unveiling ceremony took place in the Fitzgerald Building which features an array of Indian artifacts. Among those honoring Chief Anderson were Cindy Hyde-Smith, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce, who stated, "I am delighted to be a part of today's portrait unveiling ceremony honoring Chief Anderson. She exhibits such extraordinary leadership capabilities, and we are proud to feature her at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum." Hyde-Smith added, "The foremost purpose of the Museum is to display our state's rich agriculture heritage, and the role of Native Americans, which includes the Choctaws, is very significant due to the fact that they were the first agriculturists in our state," added Hyde-Smith.

Chief Anderson was pleased to participate in the unveiling ceremony on behalf of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Chief Anderson stated, "Serving as the first female Chief of the Mississippi Choctaws is my distinct honor and privilege. With today's unveiling, I am humbled that my portrait is featured with other important and visionary past leaders of our tribe." Chief Anderson added, "The story of Mississippi must always start with the Choctaws. Our people were the original inhabitants of this area, and for many centuries, we have been caretakers of this land. Today, we are the only federally recognized tribe in the state, and our reservation lands are spread across 35,000 acres in 10 Mississippi counties and into Tennessee. I hope visitors to the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum enjoy learning about Mississippi's varied and rich cultural heritage. Again, on behalf of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, thank you for this recognition."

The Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Museum, which features the National Agricultural Aviation Museum, depicts the important role that the agriculture and forestry industries have played in Mississippi's history and helps educate the general public on how these industries have shaped Mississippi's economy through the years. The Museum, located at 1150 Lakeland Drive in Jackson, is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information about the Museum, call (601) 432-4500, visit [www.msagmuseum.org](http://www.msagmuseum.org), or visit the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum on Facebook.

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Photo and cutline attached.

Cutline: A portrait of Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was unveiled today at a ceremony at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. Participating in the unveiling were (left to right) Senator Giles Ward of District 18, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith, and Chief Phyliss J. Anderson.

